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State of Maine
ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

March 13, 2008

To: Margaret Rotundo, Senate Chair
Jeremy Fischer, House Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

From: Lisa Marrache, Senate Chair
John Patrick, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Legal and Veterans Affairs

RE: Supplemental Budget Change Package

The Legal and Veterans' Affairs Committee has reviewed the changes proposed in the change package to LD 2173 – the supplemental budget. We support the items as proposed but would like to bring two items to your attention.

- **Potential additional savings:** Currently, there is a vacant marketing position within the Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages and Lottery Operations. The person who retired creating that vacancy was at the top of the pay scale (\$69K salary plus 30% benefit package). We believe that some savings can be found pertaining to this position considering the fact that when it is filled the maximum salary and benefit package will not exceed the mid-level range. In our discussions with the director of BABLO, we estimated approximately \$20K in savings.
- **Ongoing funding for veterans services officers:** In our earlier report on the supplemental plus additional targeted savings, we proposed a 5% across-the-board reduction in Maine Clean Election Act fund distributions to 2008 candidates. This reduction put LVA beyond what it was requested to find in savings. Thus, we indicated that any funds beyond those needed to reach our target would be used to fund the committee's top priority to fund veterans services officers to get veterans enrolled in the federal VA system and provide them with the services and benefits to which they are entitled. We recognize that the MCEA fund distribution reduction will not provide ongoing funding for these veterans services officers. To provide for that ongoing funding, we strongly recommend that a portion of the ongoing savings (equal to that achieved by the MCEA distribution reductions) achieved by reducing lottery ticket agent commissions from 8% to 7% be used to provide on going funding for these critical positions.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this report. Please do not hesitate to contact us or our analyst, Danielle Fox, if you have any questions or concerns.